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ACTION PA-10

INFO GPM-03 OC-01 RSC-01 USIA-12 H-02 NSC-10 NSAE-00 L-03 INR-07 P-

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5361
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AMCONSUL DANANG 795

C O N F I D E N T A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 4073

SUBJ: PRE-ELECTION ANALYSIS OF QUANG NGAI POLITICS

1. QUANG NGAI PROVINCE IS CURRENTLY SCENE OF MOST SPLINTERED POLITICAL SITUATION IN I CORPS. ALTHOUGH RANKING FIFTH IN NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS (202,664) AFTER SAIGON, GIA DINH, BINH DINH, AND AN GIANG, QUANG NGAI HAS NOT YET SEEN PRESENCE OF ANY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DURING CAMPAIGN -NOR HAVE ANY REALLY MAJOR FIGURES BUT PM KY AND GENERAL NGUYEN DUC THANG MADE A PERSONAL APPEARANCE IN PROVINCE IN SOME TIME. IN

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SPITE OF THIS, VARIOUS FEUDING PARTIES, FACTIONS, AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS HAVE TAKEN SIDES AND ARE COMPETING AS STRONGLY AS IF ALL CANDIDATES WERE NATIVE SONS. MUCH OF HEAT UNDOUBTEDLY DERIVES FROM MUTUAL ANIMOSITY OF GROUPS THEMSELVES. INTERESTINGLY, COMMON DENOMINATOR RUNNING THROUGH ALL GROUPS IS

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DESIRE TO DISCOVER WHO "AMERICAN CHOICE IS" THOUGH WHETHER TO OPPOSE OR SUPPORT HIM IS NOT MENTIONED.

2. QUANG NGAI CITY STREETS ARE WELL HUNG WITH VIS GET-OUT-AND VOTE BANNERS. HOWEVER, INDIVIDUAL LIST POSTERS HAD ONLY BEGUN TO APPEAR BY AUG 17. OBSERVERS SAY THAT GVN EFFORTS TO PROPAGANDIZE ELECTIONS IN RURAL AREAS EXCELLENT. A GREAT DEAL OF QUIET, SEMI-SECRET CAMPAIGNING BY VARIOUS PARTIES AND GRUPS HAS ALSO BEEN DONE, ACCORDING TO LOCAL CBT LEADER NGUYEN NGOC THIEU. SUCH SECRET CAMPAIGNING, HE SAYS, ALLOWS FOR MORE "FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ENABLES CAMPAIGNERS TO IGNORE RESTRICTIONS OF ELECTION LAWS." PROVINE POLICE CHIEF STATES THAT ONLY THIEU-KY REPRESENTATIVES LED BY MONTAGNARD NA DEPUTY DINH VAN ROI ARE CAMPAIGNING OPENLY. RDV CAMPAIGN

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REPRESENTATIVE TRAN HUNG CLAIMS PARTY HAS 20 MAN TEAMS WHICH HAVE

VISI-
TED ALMOST EVERY ACCESSIBLE SPOT IN PROVINCE WHILE OTHERS
HAVE CAMPAIGNED ONLY IN PROVINCE CAPITAL.

3. IT IS A GENERAL ASSUMPTION BY MANY THAT ATTEMPTS WILL BE MADE BY GVN AND OTHERS TO RIG ELECTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, AMONG CLAIMS MADE IS ALLEGATION THAT SOME CIVILIAN CANDIDATES OFFERING VN$1,2M VN PER KARSTE. SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS IN PROVINCE REPORT THAT TAN DAI VIET CANDIDATE TRUONG DINH DZU IS CLAIMING CIA BACKING THEELECTION. HIS WORKERS HAVE
BEEN TOLD SO STORY
GOES, THAT AMERICANS WILL POUR HUGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY INTO
ELECTION AT LAST MINUTE TO GUARANTEE HIS ELECTION. PROVINCE
DEPUTY FOR SECURITY NGUYEN HUAN WAS RECENTLY RELIEVED
REPORTEDLY TO BE ASSIGNED TO QUANG TRI APPARENTLY FOR ROTHINABILI
TO CONTROL RF/PF OFFICERS CAMPAGINING FOR DZU
AND FOR ALL ALLEGED CAN LAO ACTIVITY. IN EFFORT TO CONTROLPOLITICKI
ACTIVITIES OF PRO-TRAN HOANG VNQDD
FACTION CENSUS GRIVANCE CADRE. THE GC DEPUTY CHIEF NGUYEN AN,
ALSO PROVINCE CADRE, THE CG DEPUTY CHIEF NGUYEN AND ALSO
PROVINCE SECRETARY GENERAL OF PARY FACTION, WAS FIRED AND

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NGUYEN DUC TE, CG CHIEF AND ACTIVE FACTION MEMBER, SENT TO SAIGON.

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4. CATHOLICS IN QUANG NGAI ARE LED BY FATHER HUYNH TAN NGOAN, GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS LEADER OF LOCAL CAN LAO REMNANTS. NGOAN GARERALLY EXPRESSES LINE FOLLOWED IN CAN LAO LEAFLET DISSEMINATED IN I CORPS LAST MONTH. HEIS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF "US SUPPORT FOR VNQDD" THROUGH RD AND CG PROGRAMS. IN SPITE OF THIS NGOAN, WHO CLAIMS HE IS NOT INSTRUCTING CATHOLICS HOW TO VOTE, STATES CATHOLICS WILL VOTE FOR THIEU-KY IF ONLY BECAUSE THEIR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN PRECEDING ONES SINCE DIEM. OTHER OBSERVERS, US AND VIETNAMESE, IN PROVINCE ALSO STATE CAHTOLICS WIL SUPPORT THIEU. CATHOLICS WITH ABOUT 15,500 FAITHFUL
COMPRISE ABOUT 8 PERCENT OF QUANG NGAI ELECTORATE.

5. BUDDHIST SUPPORT IN PROVINCE IS GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE FOR TRAN VAN HUONG. APPROXIMATELY 80 PERCENT OF BUDDHIST BLOC IN PROVINCE IS BELIEVED TO BE PRO-TRI QUANG. REMAINING 20 PERCENT MADE UP LARGE OF PRO-TAM CHAU ELEMENTS WHO WILL PROBABLY VOTE FOR THIEU. BUDDHISTS CLOCK ESTIMATED BY POLICE FIGURES TO CONSIST OF ABOUT 52,500 VOTERS OR ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF VOTERS. HOWEVER, SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE PERCENT LISTED AS "UNCLEAR" UNDOUBTEDLY INCLUDES MANY WITH PRO-BUDDHISTS SYMPATHIES. PROVINCE CHIEF BUI HOANH CLAIMS THAT BUDDHISTS

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HAVE RECEIVED WORD FROM AN QUANG PAGODA AND THICH DON HAU IN HUE TO SUPPORT HUONG. ALTHOUGH ORIGIN OF CLAIM UNCLEAR, AND CLAIM CONFLICTS WITH INFORMATION RECEIVED IN OTHER AREAS OF I CORPS (PARTICULARLY HUE), ALMOST ALL LOCAL OBSERVERS AGREE THAT HUONG WILL RECEIVE BUDDHIST SUPPORT.

6. POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS LARGELY DOMINATED BY VNQDD PARTY WHICH TAKEN TOGETHER REPRESENTS ABOUT 14 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE (HIGHEST IN I CORPS) AND WHICH GAINED 62 PERCENT OF VOTES IN

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1966 CA ELECTION WHERE GREIIKR CHOICE AMONG COMPTEING LISTS OFFERED VOTER THAN IN ANY OTHER PROVINCE IN I CORPS. VNQDD BADLY FRAGMENTED AS USUAL, WITH SOME SUPPORT FOR THIEU, SUU, AND NORTHERN VNQDD VU HONG KHANH. TOTAL VNQDD VOTE WILL PROBABLY BE LESS THAN LAST YEAR.
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INFO OPR 03, SC 01, PSC 01, USIA 12, H 02, NSC 10, NSAE 00, L 03, INR 07, P
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AID 30, /185 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5362
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3921
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2268
AMCONSUL DANANG 796

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 4073

SUBJ: PRE-ELECTION ANALYSIS OF QUANG NGAI POLITICS

7. REV DAI VIET PARY IS SUPPORTING HA THUC KY. PARY MEMBERSHIP IS ABOUT 1 PERCENT OF VOTERS AND IN 1966 ELECTIONS RDV LIST GAINED ABOUT 13 PERCENT OF VOTE. AT THAT TIME HOWEVER, BOTH ARVN AND CATHOLICS ON PROVINCE SUPPORTED THEIR LIST. CURRENTLY CATHOLICS APPEAR TO BE SUPPORTING THIEU AS IS REGULAR MILITARY, WHICH COULD GREATLY WEAKEN RDV APPEAL. IN PROVINCE RUMOR PERSISTS THAT BUDDHISTS WILL SUPPORT KY. W THOUGH SUCH SUPPORT KY WILL PROBABLY BE LUCKY TO GET 15 PERCENT OF VOTE, NOT 30 TO 35 PEXRCENT PARTY LEADERS PREVIOUSLY HOPED FOR.

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8. TAN DAI VIET PARTY IN QUANG NGAI IS SUPPORTING DZU, ALTHOUGH ACCOUNTING FOR LESS THAN 1 PERCENT OF VOTERS, TDV

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PARY LISTS GAINED APPROXIMATELY 23 PERCENT OF VOTE IN 1966 CA ELECTIONS. AT TIME PARTY RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM ARVN PARY MEMBERS AS WELL AS FROM PERSONAL SUPPORT GENERATED BY INDEPENDENT TRAN VAN PHIEN WHO HEADED ONE OF TDV ALLIED LISTS. AS WITH RDV, TDV WILL PROBABLY LOSE MUCH OF ARVN SUPPORT. HOWEFER, TDV PARY SEEMS TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE AMONG RF/PF OFFICERS AS WELL AS QUANG NGAI CVT WHICH HAS APPARENTLY OPTED FOR DZU.

9. MILITARY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ARE GENERALLY EXPECTED TO SUPPORT THIEU. HOWEVER, THERE ARE CERTAIN QUALIFYING FACTORS. TOTAL GVN EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENT VOTERS ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT 14 PERCENT OF VOTERS OR ABOUT SAME AS VNQDD. OF THIS NUMBER ABOUT 10 PERCENT ARE MILITARY WITH 5 PERCENT BEING RF/PF TROOPS WHO CAN PROBABLY BE EXPECTED TO CONFORM MORE READILY TO PRESSURE FROM LOCAL GROUPS SUCH AS VNQDD

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THAN TO CAMPAIGNING BY REGULAR ARVN OFFICERS. THEREFORE, SIGNIFICANT MILITARY VOTE FOR THIEU IN QUANG NGAI SEEMS LESS LIKELY THAN IN MOST OTHER I CORPS PROVINCES.

10. PROVINCE OFFICIALS ALSO SEEM LIKEWARM IN SUPPORT OF THIEU. PROVINCE CHIEF BUI HOANH, WHILE GOING THROUGH MOTIONS OF SUPPORTING THIEU, IS WIDELY KNOWN TO PERSONALLY FAVOR SUU. HE IS ALMOST ASSURED OF BEING REPLACED AFTER ELECTION AND PROBABLY FEELS HE HAS LITTLE TO LOSE. HIS MOST PROBABLE SUCCESSOR NOW SEEMS TO BE NGUYEN LIEU, CURRENTLY RD CHIEF IN PROVINCE. LIEU, THOUGH A VNQDD MEMBER, IS GENERALLY CREDITED WITH BREAKING KY BO FACTION HOLD OVER WORKERS AND REDUCING ABILITY OF ANY PARTY GROUP TO USE RD WORKERS AS POLITICAL TOOL. LIEU IS REPUTED CLOSE TO BOTH THIEU AND SUU AND ENJOYS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH GENERAL THANG ALSO. LIEU REPORTEDLY FAVORS SUU FOR PRESICENCY.

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11. IN SUMMARY, SITUATION IN QUANG NGAI IS SUCH THAT IT IS

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DOUBTFUL THAT ANY CANDIDATE WILL GAIN MUCH MORE THAN 30 PERCENT OF VOTE. /J77, HUONG, AND THIEU APPEAR TO BE MOST LIKELY CONTENDERS WITH HUONG GIVEN EDGE BY MOST LOCAL OBSERVERS. A CONCERTED BUDDHIST PUST FOR HUONG, OR DARK HORSE KY, COULD OF COURSE SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE OUTCOME, BUT AT THIS LATE DATE SUCH APPEARS DOUBTFUL.
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